

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-11

H-03 INR-10 IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 SP-03

OC-06 PRS-01 RSC-01 SS-20 USIE-00 USSS-00 SY-04

FAA-00 WRD-03 SCCT-02 SCSE-00 SCA-01 PPTE-00 AID-20

PC-10 DRC-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 /141 W

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O R 121900Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2679

INFO AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

AMCONSUL CALI

UNCLAS BOGOTA 4134

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS CO

SUBJ: HIJACKING OF COLOMBIAN AIRLINER

REF: BOGOTA 4133

1. AVIANCA'S HIJACKED BOEING 727 AND THE 87 PASSENGERS AND 7 CREWMEMBERS WERE FREED AT 14:45 HOURS MAY 11 WHILE THE ACFT WAS AT BOGOTA'S ELDORADO AIRPORT WHEN THE RELIEF CREW, FOLLOWED BY SEVERAL ARMED POLICEMEN DISGUISED AS MECHANICS, BOARDED THE PLANE AND OVERPOWERED THE THREE HIJACKERS.

2. THE DRAMA BEGAN TO UNFOLD WHEN EARLIER THE HIJACKERS ALLOWED THE CREW TO BE RELIEVED AFTER BEING ON DUTY 18 HOURS SINCE THE PLANE HAD BEEN COMMANDEERED AT 20:30 HOURS MAY 10. FOLLOWING A PREARRANGED PLAN DIRECTED BY THE CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL POLICE AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE CIVIL AVIATION, THE POLICE AGENTS WERE TO ENTER THE AIRCRAFT AS MECHANICS PURPORTEDLY TO INSPECT THE PLANE, AND OVERPOWER THE HIJACKERS AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY. WHEN THE RELIEF CO-PILOT WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE AIRCRAFT, A HI-UNCLASSIFIED

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JACKER WITH PISTOL IN HAND BEGAN TO FRISK HIM. AT THAT MOMENT

THE COPILOT JUMPED UPON THE HIJACKER AND BOTH ROLLED DOWN THE STAIRWAY TO THE GROUND WHERE THE HIJACKER WAS SHOT AND KILLED. THE POLICE AGENTS DISGUISED AS MECHANICS LOST NO TIME AND STORMED THE PLANE SEIZING A HIJACKER WHO HAD A BOMB CONSISTING OF TWO STICKS OF DYNAMITE WHICH DID NOT HAVE THE FUSE IN THEM. SIMULTANEOUSLY AND IN GREAT HASTE, THE PASSENGERS BEGAN TO EVACUATE THE PLANE BY THE NEAREST EXIT. SEVERAL OF THEM WERE HURT WHEN THEY HIT THE GROUND. PROFITING FROM THE CONFUSION THE THIRD HIJACKER LEFT THE PLANE BUT WAS RECOGNIZED BY PASSENGERS AND ARRESTED BY THE POLICE SOME DISTANCE FROM THE AIRCRAFT.

3. A SMALL NUMBER AMONG THE PASSENGERS HAD PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED AN ESCAPE PLAN BY FORMING THREE GROUPS WHICH AT A GIVEN SIGNAL WOULD EACH TAKE CARE OF ONE HIJACKER. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER ANY OF THESE TOOK AN ACTIVE PART IN FREEING THE AIRPLANE.

4. ACCORDING TO THEIR PLAN, THE HIJACKERS, AFTER OBTAINING THE EIGHT MILLION PESO RANSOM, WERE TO FLY TO A SMALL AIRPORT IN COLOMBIA OR A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY AND ESCAPE. THEIR NAMES ARE: CARLOS ARTURO TABARES 26 (KILLED), JORGE ENRIQUE AVILA CAMPOS AND PEDRO JULIO RODRIGUEZ HERNANDEZ 24.

5. THE THOUSANDS OF SPECTATORS THAT SURROUNDED THE AIRPLANE PREVENTED AN ORDERLY INTERROGATION OF THE PASSENGERS BY THE POLICE. ONLY FOREIGNERS INTERVIEWED WERE A GERMAN AND A JAPANESE AND HIS WIFE. APPARENTLY NO AMERICANS ON BOARD BUT NOT CONFIRMED. VAKY

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